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Manifestations of the Production of Culture Perspective in Online Social Networks for

Musicians

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and corporations. I conclude that the confluence of dramatic changes in technology,
market, industry structure, and occupational careers has contributed to the creation of a
new landscape of popular music. In Part Two, I draw upon my empirical research of the
MySpace online social network. I compare the usage and utility of MySpace for artists of
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independent record label, and unsigned) and artists in different countries. Finally, I reflect
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INTRODUCTION

The American music industry is currently in a contentious, transitional state (Leyshon et al., 2005). In the wake of plummeting record sales, major record labels have cut their rosters of musicians, once-mighty record stores have gone bankrupt, and corporate radio has limited the number of musicians that they broadcast. Consequently, the traditional paths to success have narrowed greatly for musicians.

To examine a music industry that is "full of highly dynamic and contentious spaces that are undergoing subtle and sometimes profound transformations on an almost daily basis" (Wendel, 2008, p. 62), the sociology of music is of utmost relevance. The sociological analysis of music "provides an important and engaging purchase on [a broad range of] topics that are of great concern to sociologists" (Roy & Dowd, 2010, p. 3). Moreover, a sociological understanding of music provides "rich opportunities… to foster music cultures defined by more varied discursive practices, and by extension greater sonic plentitude" (Wendel, 2008, p. 104). Despite "the utility of studying music as the result of the collective activity of the people involved in the musical process," (Becker, 1989, p. 276), there is still a dearth of literature that analyzes the changing landscape of the modern music industry from a sociological approach.

In this thesis, I examine the modern music industry through a sociological perspective. In Part One, I identify salient changes in the production of music. Several notable developments in the music industry have had far-reaching implications for artists, fans, and corporations. I conclude that the confluence of dramatic changes in technology, market, industry structure, and occupational careers has contributed to the creation of a new landscape of popular music. In Part Two, I draw upon my empirical research of the

MySpace online social network. I compare the usage and utility of MySpace for artists of varying record label affiliation (i.e. signed to a major record label, signed to an independent record label, and unsigned) and artists in different countries. Finally, I reflect on general trends in musicians' use of online social networks in an attempt to identify the ways in which these networks reflect the shifts in the broader music industry (e.g., technology, market, industry structure, and careers) and a new landscape of popular music. Before turning to my specific concerns, however, I will first locate this project in the existing sociological literature on music.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Music and Sociology

According to esteemed sociologist Howard Becker, music, like any artwork, "involves the joint activity of a [large number] of people. Through their cooperation the art work we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation" (Becker, 1982, p. 1). Because music is intrinsically embedded in social interaction, the study of music – and the social relations that music both shapes and reflects – offers valuable and relevant contributions to the broader sociological community (Roy & Dowd, 2010). In spite of this, early sociologists delineated a narrowly framed concept of 'society' that generally overlooked music (Roy & Dowd, 2010). In recent decades, however, the sociology of music has become a vibrant field of study, owing much to developments in the 'Art Worlds' (Becker, 1982) and 'Production of Culture' (Peterson, 1976) perspectives of the 1970s (Dowd, 2004b).

Proponents of the sociology of music dismiss the romantic notion of the isolated artist, and instead see music as an activity that "people do together," and an object that is "the result of what a lot of people have done jointly" (Becker, 1989, p. 282). They understand that "music is a mode of interaction that expresses and constitutes social relations and that embodies cultural assumptions regarding these relations" (Roy & Dowd, 2010, p. 5). Unlike musicologists, sociologists are not primarily concerned with analyzing technical content nor are they concerned with 'decoding' music to find secret meanings as reflections of society (Becker, 1989). Instead, they focus on music as the product of myriad social interactions. The sociology of music is "really a subfield of empirical sociology" and is consequently "less interested in genius and rare works and more interested in journeymen and routine work which most art consists of" (Becker, 1989, p. 282). Thus, the 'cultural objects' that these sociologists study are not limited to the music of celebrated composers and other highbrow art. On the contrary, these sociologists consider the popular arts to be particularly relevant objects of study, and 'cultural objects' in the truest form.

Production of Culture Perspective

In the 1970s, Richard Peterson introduced and consolidated the 'Production of Culture' perspective (Peterson & Berger 1975; Peterson 1976, 1978) that "[has become] hegemonic within the sociology of art and media… and the sociology of music" (DiMaggio, 2000, p.108). This perspective focuses on the fabrication of symbolic elements of culture: art works, literature, popular culture, scientific research reports, religious practices, legal judgments, journalism, etcetera (Peterson, 1976). More

specifically, the production of culture perspective emphasizes that elements of culture are shaped by the systems within which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Peterson posits that the creation and dissemination of cultural objects is ultimately a collective effort that is shaped by six facets[1] that constrain or facilitate production: organizational structure, industry structure, occupational career, technology, law and regulation, and audience preferences (the 'market'). While changes in each facet may seem mundane, changes in one or more of these factors have implications for the overall collective effort (Peterson & Anand, 2004). In essence, the production perspective contends that variation in the content of symbol systems is a function of variation in the social organization of their production, distribution, and use (DiMaggio, 2000).

When it emerged in the 1970s, the production of culture perspective challenged the then-dominant idea that social structure and the broader culture mirror each other. At the time, a wide range of social theorists, including Marxists and functionalists, embraced the idea of "a symbiotic relationship between a singular functioning social system and its coherent overarching culture" (Peterson & Anand, 2004, p. 312). Marxists distinguished between social structure (e.g., the economy) and cultural superstructure (e.g., ideology), and asserted that capitalists shaped culture to advance their own class interests. On the other hand, functionalists believed that a set of monolithic abstract values determined the shape of social structure. Peterson challenged these theories and their assumption of

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[1] Earlier work in the production of culture perspective refers to the six factors that shape cultural symbols as 'constraints.' Peterson has since refrained from using this word because its use has "unintentionally led to the idea that the six forces so named only limit or hold back creative forces, but they can also stimulate change" (1990, p. 98).

mirroring with the production perspective, which "views both culture and social structure as elements in an ever-changing patchwork" (Peterson & Anand, 2004, p. 312).

The production of culture perspective shifts focus from the broader society and culture linkage to specific contexts and its particular cultural objects. As it applies to music, this perspective emphasizes that music is shaped by the environment in which it is created, performed, and disseminated. Through this lens, Peterson (1990) effectively exposed the essential contributions of the culture industry to the advent of rock music in 1955.

Peterson (2000) attributed the advent of rock music – a major aesthetic revolution – to changes in socio-cultural context: new developments in copyright and patent laws and FCC regulation, the invention of television and transistor radios, notable changes in radio programming, etcetera. The introduction of television in the late 1940s prompted the transfer of network radio programming to television, which provoked radio programmers to turn to the cheapest effective form of programming: playing recorded music. In the early 1950s, power in the music industry was concentrated in the hands of a few large record labels that controlled the production, distribution, and marketing of new music. Despite the growing public demand for greater variety in music, these record labels were financially and aesthetically committed to the big-band-crooner style of popular music. In an effort to tap into the unsatisfied market demand, a network of independent record distributors developed. These small distributors experimented with new sounds and released new styles of music that expanded the available universe of musical content. The arrival of cheap transistor radios and the development of Top Forty radio-as-jukebox format facilitated audience exposure to a wide range of music, including

the new styles of music released by the independent distributors. Radio exposure contributed to a shift in consumption patterns, which allowed the small, independent distributors to succeed in the industry, liberating the industry from oligopolistic control. As Peterson (1990) explained, "In a matter of two dozen [unexceptional] months between late 1954 and early 1957 rock was forged in this cauldron of entrepreneurial creativity" (p. 114). In effect, Peterson argued that the confluence of shifts in market (e.g., experimental styles of music and change in audience preferences), technology (e.g., the invention of television and transistor radios), organizational structure (e.g., the less-bureaucratic independent labels), industry structure (e.g., the loss of oligopolistic control), occupational careers (e.g., the shift from primarily functionary positions in radio/music industry toward entrepreneurial, showman and/or craftsman positions), and law (e.g., the new developments in copyright and patent laws) offer an explanation for the perplexing and seemingly inexplicable musical revolution of 1955.

Similarly, Peterson demonstrated the role of the six aforementioned 'constraints' (organizational structure, industry structure, occupational career, technology, law and regulation, and market) in his explanation of the emergence of jazz music following World War I (Peterson, 1967; 1972) and the great change in country music in the 1970s (Peterson & DiMaggio, 1975).

Although sociologists have made substantial progress in the sociology of music, illustrated applications of the production perspective for music are still limited in number and scope. In his review of production perspectives, Timothy Dowd (2004b) suggested, "musical production literature would benefit from concerted attention to factors that too often it ignores – audiences [and] technology" (p. 244).

The production of culture perspective was a pivotal development for the sociology of music because it channels insight from non-musical sociological theories and allows for its application to musical production (Dowd, 2004b). In the four decades following the emergence of the production perspective, burgeoning literature in the sociology of music has employed various theoretical perspectives that draw on a wide range of non-musical theories. In his review of theoretical perspectives employed in the sociology of music, Timothy Dowd (2004b) highlighted a select few: the new institutionalism in organizational sociology (DiMaggio on high culture), industrial organization economics (Peterson and Berger on diversity), queuing theory (Clawson on women bassists), social movements (Rocigno and Danaher on worker mobilization), cultural studies (Regev on Hebrew videos), and economic sociology (Dowd on R&B). Yet, while sociologists currently employ various theoretical perspectives in musical production literature, "the substantive focus of these works resonates with the initial concerns of the Production of Culture perspective" (Dowd, 2004b, p. 243).

PART ONE: PRODUCTION OF MUSIC IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

Historically, major record labels have defined many of the conditions, practices, and power relations around production, marketing and distribution of music. However, in the context of today's low-cost music production and distribution technologies, online social networks present sustainable opportunities for musicians to operate outside of historically dominant music industry logics. Musicians connect directly to audiences via social networking websites such as MySpace, and operate increasingly outside of dominant discourses. These recent developments have profoundly challenged the

American music industry's traditional models of music production, distribution, and consumption.

In an effort to explain the changing landscape of popular music, this section will identify salient changes in four of the aforementioned facets of the music industry: technology, audiences, industry structure, and occupational careers.

I. *Changes in Technology*

Given that various technological devices enable music making, technology is often a focal point of research on the music industry. Although there is no consensus regarding how technology contributes to market transformation, many researchers emphasize the contributions of technology to dramatic transformations in the music market (Dowd, 2005).

DeNora (1995) illustrates one micro-level example of the importance of technology in the music industry in her research on classical performer/composer Ludwig van Beethoven. She attributes the illustrious success of Beethoven to the development of the pianoforte – an instrument that could be played very loudly or softly and sensitively. Given Beethoven's notably heavy, emotional, and imprecise playing style, the pianoforte was an indispensable technology that enabled Beethoven to express his skills as a performer. Had this technology not emerged, Beethoven would have remained a provincial musician on the streets of Vienna (DeNora, 1995).

In the twentieth century, various technological developments "radically altered music" (Peterson & Anand, 2004, p. 314). Recording technologies – beginning with the phonograph – enabled the projection of sounds over time, and the introduction of radio enabled the projection of sound over space (Chanan, 1995). More recently, musical

instruments such as microphones (Lockheart, 2003) and electric guitars (Waksman, 1999) have transformed various aspects of the music industry. Timothy Dowd (2005) chronicled the critical technological developments and the embedded impact of these technologies in the market for prerecorded music.

In recent years, new technologies such as broadband and advances in consumer electronics have paved the way for vast music sharing networks and online communities. A handful of salient technological developments have had a particularly large impact on the music industry:

i. *Digital technology*

Over the past twenty-five years, digital technologies have permeated the music industry. In 1982, one record firm innovated a new technological form for the product: the compact disc (CD). Unlike the vinyl and analog formats that preceded it, digital formats allow for repeated disc play without eroding the quality of the disc (Dowd, 2005). Much to the dismay of record companies, digital formats also allow for exact duplication of audio files using digital audiotape (DAT) machines (Dowd, 2005). While record firms pursued a legal battle to contain DAT technology in the 1990s, German company Fraunhofer-Gesellshaft developed MP3 technology – an innovative technology for sound transmission that soon became the format of choice for those wishing to exchange musical files. Digital music found on CDs can easily be converted into MP3 and duplicated. Moreover, MP3 technology compresses audio files into digital sound files less than one tenth of the original size. Essentially, MP3 technology not only enables duplication of prerecorded music, but also facilitates its dissemination (Dowd, 2005).

ii. Production Tools

In his case study of the British dance music industry, David Hesmondhalgh (1998) captures the significance of the decentralization of British sub-cultural music production, which he attributes in part to the widespread availability of production technology in the 1990s. Whereas the recording industry as a whole is marked by concentration and centralization, the British dance music industry of the 1980s and 1990s was unusual in that it was relatively decentralized and was primarily comprised of small, independent record companies. Hesmondhalgh (1998) demonstrates how the accessibility of "relatively affordable (though not 'cheap') compact digital recording technology" (p. 236) – symbolized by the metaphor of the 'bedroom studio' – facilitated the emergence of independent distributors in Britain. Many people predicted that the large number of independent record companies would challenge multinational corporations' oligopolistic control of the music industry. Hesmondhalgh observes that the "Do-It-Yourself appropriation of relatively inexpensive digital technology by British musicians meant that [genres of underground dance music] have formed the basis of the 'independent' sector of the British dance music industry" (p. 237). In effect, he suggests that the relative accessibility of production tools in 'bedroom studios' in the 1990s had far-reaching implications for the British dance music industry.

In the decade following Hesmondhalgh's analysis of the British dance music industry, the accessibility of production tools has increased dramatically. Historically, only record companies invested in production tools due to the costly nature of these devices for recording and editing. In recent years, however, production tools have become fractionally cheaper and more accessible. Production programs such as

GarageBand have become standard on many personal computers, including all computers sold by Apple, Inc. Whereas the affordability of production tools in the 1990s facilitated the emergence of independent distributors of dance music, the marginal cost of modern production tools enables all individuals to create and record music. With the relative ubiquity of personal computers, millions of people now have access to music-producing technologies that were previously only available to professionals. The democratization of production tools has fostered an explosion in content from both professional musicians and hobbyists, with the available universe of content growing at an unprecedented rate. In contrast with the previous "economy of scarcity, controlled by a finite array of publishers" (p. 7), there is now a theoretically unlimited "economy of abundance" (Knowles, 2007, p. 7) in the music industry.

iii. Internet and Web 2.0

As Peterson and Anand (2004) acknowledge, "changes in communication technology profoundly destabilize and create new opportunities in art and culture" (p. 314). The classic example is the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, which was a significant force in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and Protestant Reformation. More recently, the development of the Internet exemplified a revolutionary technological advancement that has profoundly influenced culture (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Research by Crane et al. (2002) and Roe and De Meyer (2001) illustrates this phenomenon and demonstrates that the Internet has facilitated the rapid globalization of culture.

The Internet has had an especially profound impact on the world of music. Many authors have addressed the potential of the Internet to enable artists to produce, market, and distribute their own work independently (Burnett, 2010). Two recent empirical studies discuss the advantages of Internet usage for musicians; a case study by Zwaan et al. (2009) concludes that Internet usage benefits the career of pop musicians in the Netherlands while Pinheiro and Dowd (2009) demonstrate that usage of the Internet for music contributes to the financial success of jazz musicians. Moreover, various studies suggest that the widespread use of the Internet has had tremendous implications for the distribution and consumption of music (Anderson, 2006; Bargfrede, 2007; Beer, 2008)

In recent years, Internet technology has continued to influence the world of music – and more specifically the music industry – with the development of what Tim O'Reilly (2005) distinguishes as 'Web 2.0.' Although there have been no fundamental changes in the underlying technical architecture of the Internet, O'Reilly uses the term Web 2.0 to distinguish a shift in the way the Web is utilized by developers and users. In contrast to read-only websites (Web 1.0), Web 2.0 websites allow users to do more than just retrieve information. Web 2.0 takes the Internet to be a platform for participation where users can contribute to and modify website content. Web 2.0 websites – which include social networking sites, web-based communities, wikis, and blogs – facilitate interactive information sharing and collaboration on the Internet.

Using popular musician Jarvis Cocker as a focal point, David Beer (2008) conducted an exploratory analysis of Web 2.0 applications. Based on his initial findings, Beer urged future researchers to attempt to understand the role of music in making the connections

that form the collaborative and participatory cultures of Web 2.0 and social networking sites.

v. Digital Distribution

The distribution outlets for music have evolved considerably in the last decade. Historically, inventories of music occupied expensive physical shelf space in local, brick-and-mortar record stores. Due to the limited shelf space and high overhead costs of brick-and-mortar record stores, only the most promising products – those with a certain expected profitability of profit margin – could be allowed in (du Gay & Negus, 1995). Thus, music catalogues were traditionally narrow in variety, consisting primarily of mainstream, popular music.

As with the bookselling business (Miller, 1999) and other retail industries in the United States, a series of startling changes overtook the music retail industry with the advent of the modern chain superstore. Despite less expensive shelf space in national warehouses, the catalogue of available CD titles at Wal-Mart, the nation's largest music retailer, averages a mere 4500 unique titles (Anderson, 2006). This inventory constitutes less than half a percent of all the music available, and often excludes or marginalizes entire genres such as Dance, Jazz, Classical, and Country (Anderson, 2006). According to David Gottlieb, a former label executive, Wal-Mart carries only 750 of the estimated 30,000 new albums released each year – a staggering 2.5 percent of new music (Anderson, 2006).

Even music superstores are limited by physical confines, since they "rent [shelf space] by the half inch" (Anderson, 2006, p. 152). The average music superstore can

carry only about 40,000 unique CD titles; over 95 percent of available music never sees the inside of a physical retail store (Anderson, 2006).

Following the emergence of the Internet, new developments in online distribution present alternatives to traditional retail outlets (Gopal et al., 2006). Low distribution costs and unlimited virtual shelf space allow online retailers to carry a limitless catalogue with infinite shelf life. Amazon and other online retailers offer upwards of 150,000 unique CDs (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009). Unlike physical retail stores, online retailers offer a substantial amount of niche genres and out-of-print catalogue music for sale. Moreover, online retailers are not forced to categorize products in inflexible taxonomies that can force a customer to guess which genre subsection was deemed appropriate for a specific artist. Poor organization in physical stores can also frustrate customers who search for a CD that may have been misplaced or sold out. Online retailers have the singular ability to categorize and rearrange products to meet a consumer's needs (Anderson, 2006).

The innovation of digital compression technology (e.g., MP3 encoding format) also created new possibilities for distribution: digital distribution. Wendel (2008) attributes the "ongoing evisceration of physicality in the music industry (e.g., the prior need to produce vinyl, cassettes, and/or CDs)" (p. 59) to the dual assault of the Internet and digital compression technology. Capitalizing on the concept of digital distribution, digital retailers like iTunes, Napster, Rhapsody, and MusicMatch emerged as the primary vendors of digital music. These four digital retailers offer a combined total of over three million unique tracks available for download (Tepper & Hargattai, 2009). The ease and convenience of digital distribution makes digital retailers an increasingly popular source of music for consumers.

Yet, these digital retailers are not the only source for MP3 files on the Internet. Recognizing the combined potential of MP3 and Internet technologies for illegal digital music distribution, entrepreneurial computer programmers devised tools to exploit the distribution of MP3 files; the result was peer-to-peer (p2p) file sharing (Bargfrede, 2007). In a centralized peer-to-peer network (e.g., Napster), a central server facilitates connections between hard drives and allows clients to locate and download files directly from one another. All clients are effectively also servers, thereby generating a large selection of files for others to download (Collard, 2006). The development of the Internet and the subsequent design of p2p networks "sparked a revolution in the way people obtain music" (p. 2).

Market research suggests a shift towards digital distribution, with p2p file-sharing and online retail outlets responsible for a majority of music distribution (Collard, 2006). In an effort to understand the economic implications of this transition, various researchers have conducted empirical studies. The results a four-year analysis of survival rates of traditional music specialty stores found that brick and mortar music stores experienced a decline of about 7 percent between the years 1998 and 2002, with decreased survival rate in areas with higher broadband connectedness (Zentner, 2008). An economic analysis of the music industry by Oberholzer-Gee et al. (2007) concluded that file-sharing has a negligible impact on album sales. Gopal et al. (2006) found that file-sharing technologies erode the superstar phenomenon widely prevalent in the music business, and attempts to prevent sampling will be counterproductive in the long run. Through extensive empirical investigations, they found that lowering the cost of sampling music will propel more consumers to purchase music online.

vi. Music Communities and Online Social Networks

By definition, a 'community' exists through dialogue and through an exchange of past social history and current social interaction (Kibby, 2000). Consequently, music communities have traditionally been associated with local places (Kibby, 2000). Recent developments in communication technology – namely the emergence of Web 2.0 – have contributed to a "deterritorialization of space within a global cultural economy" (Fenster, 1995, p. 85). Peterson and Anand (2004) report that "digital media have influenced music culture by making possible the creation of cybergroups focused on musical tastes" (p. 315). More generally, digital media have influenced culture by enabling individuals to connect in massive online social networks.

Prior to widespread access to and use of the Internet, social networks were primarily offline and grounded in physical interactions. In recent years, the development of Web 2.0 has facilitated the formation of online communities and social networks.

Following the emergence of the Internet, sociologists were particularly interested in identity construction and self-presentation in the online world (Ellison, 2006; Dominick, 1999; Schau & Gilly, 2003; Turkle, 1995; Bargh, 2002; Kendall, 2000). Online environments offer individuals increased control of their self-presentation, and thus offer greater opportunities for misrepresentation of self in the construction of online identity (Cornwell & Lundgren, 2001). The anonymity and enormity of the Internet enables users to adopt various personas – even a different gender, age, or race; therefore, concerns about online deception are common (Bowker & Tuffin, 2003; Donath, 1999; Donn & Sherman, 2002). Yet, existing sociological research on the presentation of self

suggests that the Internet actually facilitates expression of the 'true self' and that the overwhelming majority of individuals present an authentic sense of self (Bargh, 2002).

Because digital media have enabled individuals to foster interpersonal connections online, and because self-presentation on the Internet is generally consistent with self-presentation in the physical world, online social networks are an extremely important development (Nieckarz, 2005). While offline social networks are reliant on geographically limited and more time-dependent forms of communication, online social networks allow for more rapid, spatially-independent, peer-to-peer communication.

As Yochai Benkler (2006) suggests in his book *The Wealth of Networks*, online social networks provide for "attractive supplements as we seek new and diverse ways to embed ourselves in relation to others, to gain efficacy in weaker ties, and to interpolate different social networks in combinations that provide us both stability of context and greater degree of freedom from the hierarchical and constraining aspects of some of our social relations" (p. 377). A previously unimaginable range of connections "can emerge based on interest, common need, or commercial enterprise, such as scholarly networks among academics; social and medical support groups; Usenet discussion groups; online universities, course, and degree programs; and activist groups" (Haythornthwaite, 2005, p. 141).

In the music industry, online social networks facilitate connections between countless established and aspiring musicians, music fans, and up-and-coming entrepreneurs that together define a diverse range of music communities. Contemporary examples of online social networks active in music include Web 2.0 networks like MySpace, Last-FM, Imeem, and Facebook. In the music industry, online social networks

"provide for more rich forms of digital self-expression, visible articulations of broader social networks based on a range of interests, and potentials for collaborative relationships" (Wendel, 2008, p. 65).

In a digital age, musicians can utilize social networking websites[2] to share, promote, and even sell their music, as well as to connect with fans and niche audiences more directly. The utility of social networking sites for promotional purposes is particularly significant. In the aforementioned case study of the British dance music industry, David Hesmondhalgh (1998) emphasizes the importance of low promotion costs for the dance music industry. He explains, "the minimal promotional costs allowed by the massive press coverage of the early rave scene represent a significant factor in decentralization [and the creation of local dance scenes]" (p. 237). The early rave scene in Britain generated a 'moral panic' that gave the genre special sub-cultural credibility, which fostered a particularly active audience. Moreover, the moral panic associated with early rave culture demanded massive press coverage and obviated the need for promotional skills and marketing costs on the part of the incipient independent sector.

Even the minimal promotional costs that Hesmondhalgh credited as being a fundamental force in the decentralization of the British dance music industry have since been eliminated with the emergence of Web 2.0 and online social networks. The aforementioned social networking sites are available to musicians, who may use them to promote their music free-of-charge. A case study of Swedish indie fandom found that recording artists and labels are actively engaged in online music communities, providing

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[2] Boyd and Ellison define social networking sites as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (boyd and Ellison 2007)

steady streams of music for free legal distribution, friending their fans and one another, and often acting as fans themselves (Baym, 2007). In their formative research on digital music exploration, Steven Tepper and Eszter Hegittai (2009) emphasize the importance of [online and offline] social networks and traditional media.

II. *Changes in Audience Preferences (the "Market")*

Although Peterson (1978) identified market conditions as one of six facets central to the production of culture, literature in musical production is sometimes criticized for its inattention to audiences (DiMaggio, 2000). Peterson "[privileges] explanatory factors external to the creative act" (DiMaggio 2000, p. 109) and "has endogenized audience preferences to market structures" (p. 109), focusing instead on "the question of... whose taste will be catered to, which depends increasingly on the intervening technological and organizational elements in the production of culture" (p. 109). Peterson has primarily considered the way that producers construct markets, which "result from the actions of cliques of producers who interact with and observe each others' attempts to satisfy customer tastes" (Peterson & Anand, 2004, p. 317). Previous research has established the importance of the producers' construction of music markets: Peterson (1997) on country music, Keyes (2002) on rap music, and Gebesmair (2001) on Latin American music. Peterson (1997) illustrated the significant role of market creation for music that was first commercialized as 'hillbilly music' in the mid-1920s and later reconceptualized as 'country music' in the 1950s.

In the wake of democratized production and distribution, however, perhaps audience preferences – and audience behavior more generally – merit greater

consideration. Moreover, since audience preferences are somewhat intrinsically entangled in the available universe of content, changes in these aspects of the market may contribute to explaining the changing landscape of popular music in the twenty first century:

i. *The Long Tail Market*

The democratization of production tools blurred the distinction between amateur and professional musicians and contributed to exponential growth in the available universe of musical content. The transition to online music distribution facilitated access to a theoretically infinite universe of musical content while digital recommendation services and online social networks help to connect supply with demand. These recent developments – the democratization of the production tools, diversification of distribution tools, and a way to connect supply with demand – constitute the three critical forces of Chris Anderson's Long Tail economic theory. In the modern music industry, developments in production and distribution tools and recommendation services have propelled movement away from the 'hit or miss' (or 'short tail') music market and facilitated the growth of the 'long tail' music market.

The Long Tail is a supply and demand distribution where mainstream hit peak sales constitute the 'head' with decreasing demand flowing through to a long 'tail' made up of lesser selling titles. Anderson (2006) offered this concise explanation: " Our culture and economy are increasingly shifting away from a focus on a relatively small number of hits (mainstream products and markets) at the head of the demand curve, and moving toward a huge number of niches in the tail" (p. 55). On the basis of research into sales data, Anderson (2006) suggests that sale of Long Tail music titles now constitutes over

40 percent of total music sales, with niche music dominating sales in online retail outlets.

Whereas classical music accounts for a mere 5 percent of music sales, it constitutes

upwards of 12 percent of all sales on iTunes. This is a clear illustration of Anderson's

prediction that "niche culture will get less obscure" (p. 182). However, Anderson (2006)

suggested that the Long Tail market is "simply a rebalancing of the equation, an

evolution from an "Or" era of hits *or* niches (mainstream culture vs. sub-cultures) to an

"And" era… of head *and* tail, hits *and* niches, institutions *and* individuals, professionals

and amateurs" (p. 182). He suggests that the shift towards a Long Tail music market is an

evident and substantial change in the music market.

ii.   *Audience Behavior/Fandom*

Prior to the development of recording technology, music production was an

active, incorporative practice. Musicians performed to live public audiences in folk music

communities where producers and consumers interacted naturally. However, the

development of recording technology resulted in the commodification of popular music,

which inscribed a clear division between music producers and music consumers. The

commercial consumption of recorded music replaced the active music production of folk

music communities, which resulted in "a classic case of what Marx called alienation:

something human is taken from us and returned in the form of a commodity" (Frith,

1987, p. 54). Moreover, the commodification of popular music prompted a shift from

public performance space to private listening space, increasing the isolation of the

consumer from the musician and from other consumers (Kibby, 2000; Roy & Dowd,

2010).

According to Frith (1986), fans have attempted to reconnect to performers and other consumers by developing symbolic links. For example, fans believe that listening to an artist's music affords them access to the artist's souls and sensibilities. Frith maintains that fans have developed symbolic links to maintain a sense of commonality between performer and listener, and to create a community among fans. Several subsequent studies have illustrated the manifestations of this theory.

In her case study of a musician's chat page in 1996, Marjorie Kibby (2000) found that "the exchange of information online allows fans a feeling of community between themselves and between them and the performer… although they are dispersed geographically and disparate in needs and experiences" (p. 91). The development of the Internet and the subsequent development of social networking sites has enabled and facilitated the formation and growth of fan communities across geographic borders and the interaction of musicians and fans. This has several implications for consumers. First, the opportunity to connect with fans and musicians decreases the isolation of the consumer from the musician and from other consumers. Second, the presence of virtual fan communities has particularly salient implications for consumers, especially consumers of niche genres or obscure musicians. In the case of John Prine, a performer whose fans are "still a minority in most geographic communities, and are isolated by the lifestyle of their 35-plus age group" (p. 91), Kibby (2000) found that "a fan community was established, in that the chat page became a meeting place that could not exist within real-world boundaries" (p. 91). The development of Web 2.0 technologies enables fans to connect with each other and with the musician. In a digital age, the relationships among fans, musicians, and industries are changing.

A study of the music scene in Canterbury, England also supports the notion that fan websites play a big role in creating the 'scene'. Bennett (2002) found that the Canterbury music scene was actually a virtual scene rather than an urban one. That is, the Canterbury 'scene' was more an exaggerated fabrication on the Internet than one that was actually found at the time in Canterbury, England.

In the case of online fan communities, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In other words, the online fan community is not simply the collection of individual fans. Rather, the existence of a fan community fosters an entirely new dynamic among fans – a fandom. The existence of fandoms perpetuates demand for the music among existing fans, and also draws attention to the previously unrepresented fan community.

A case study of Swedish indie fandom shed light on a "new form of online social organization in which [fans] move amongst a complex ecosystem of sites, building connections amongst themselves and their sites as they do" (Baym, 2007, 9). Baym observed how fans use varied platforms to "get one another excited about relatively obscure new music, to share news, to compare perspectives through reviews and discussion, to create public identities as members of this fandom, and to form personal relationships with one another" (p. 9).

These studies shed light on the utility of online social networks in creating and expanding fan communities. As David Beer (2008) illustrates in his exploratory research of Web 2.0 applications, fans communicate on many platforms across the Internet: blogs, social networks, comments, discussion forums, private messages, shoutboxes, MP3 files, and videos. With the emergence of Web 2.0, fans have the tools to share their musical tastes and actively promote artists and bands. To some extent, fans have always been

publicists, albeit limited in their publicity outlets. In the context to Web 2.0, the distinction between fan and publicist is increasingly blurred (Baym, 2007).

iii. Music Discovery

Digital media have revolutionized not only the ways in which musicians produce and distribute content, but also the ways in which listeners discover new music. Consumers have access to revolutionary methods of discovering new music: playlist sharing via Imeem, music blogs such as Pitchfork and Stereogum, and digital recommendation services such as Last.fm, Jango, and Pandora Internet radio. As Charles Bargfrede (2007) concludes in his study of digital music distribution, "the hegemony of terrestrial radio as an outlet for new music has become diluted with the availability of [digital] recommendation services" (p. 26). McGuire and Slater (2005) suggest that Web 2.0 applications designed to help users share their taste in music are essential tools for consumer taste sharing, and their research concludes that consumer taste sharing represents a powerful force for taste-making and artist exposure.

While digital recommendation services certainly represent powerful new potential for music discovery, it should be noted that recent research found that the collaborative filtering approach used by Web 2.0 music recommendation application Last.fm is prone to popularity bias, which has consequences for the discovery ratio (Celma & Cano, 2008). This empirical study found that Last.fm – which has a recommendation system based on social tagging and the classic item-based algorithm – tends to reinforce popular artists at the expense of discarding lesser-known music while audio content-based recommender systems and human expert-based recommendations are more useful in

facilitating artist discovery.

Despite the questionable efficacy of Last.fm in facilitating artist discovery, the development of the technological concept and the demand for the technology is significant. Moreover, digital media in the form of music blogs and shared playlists present reliable new pathways to artist discovery. New sources of music discovery reshape the market by exposing consumers to new artists and "connecting supply with demand" (Anderson, 2006), which can shift audience behaviors.

III. *Changes in Industry Structure and Occupational Careers*

Two salient changes have occurred in the music industry in recent years. On the one hand, the traditional paths to success have narrowed greatly for musicians – particularly as major record labels have cut their rosters of musicians, as once-mighty record stores have gone bankrupt, and as corporate radio has greatly limited the number of musicians that they broadcast (Dowd, personal correspondence). On the other hand, the availability of tools for production and distribution in today's networked culture allow contemporary independent musicians to realize greater autonomy and creative freedom. The connective and collaborative potentials of online social networks "offer a range of sustainable opportunities for artists to operate more fully outside of historically dominant industry logics and practices" (Wendel, 2008, p. 62). The ongoing evisceration of physical products in the music industry and the connective and collaborative abilities of online social networks have prompted a dramatic shift in industry structure, organizational structure, and occupational careers (Wendel 2008; Bockstedt et al. 2006).

In their assessment of structural changes in the digital music market, e-commerce researchers Bockstedt et al. (2006) conclude that "the power traditionally associated with some players has been shifting to others" (p. 27). The transition to digitally formatted music files has been decreasing the necessity for traditional sales channels and distribution processes. Moreover, artists now have the power to distribute their own music while "record labels are not needed to cover the costs of manufacturing and distributing physical recordings, and traditional brick-and-mortar retailers may become obsolete" (p. 27).

With digital production and distribution via online social networks, artists in the music industry today can sustain autonomy from traditional intermediaries while also potentially reaching an audience. In 2007, The Black Kids – an unsigned quintet from Jacksonville, Florida – self-released their four-song debut record, the *Wizard of Ahhhs* EP, in digital format via MySpace. Aside from the equipment, recording, and mastering costs (the latter two of which could have hypothetically been done at no cost using Apple Inc.'s 'Garage Band' software), The Black Kids spent absolutely nothing to manufacture and distribute copies of their EP, which debuted to critical acclaim. In October 2007, internationally popular artists Radiohead and Nine Inch Nails purportedly severed ties to their respective record labels, and undertook their own artist-led, experimental strategies to market and distribute their music. While this hints at the profound ramifications of today's networked culture on approaches to music making, Evan Wendel (2008) sees these actions as "representative of a stepping outside of prior dominant discourse" (p. 90). Bockstedt et al. (2006) predicts that "record companies and production companies may lose in this new environment" (p. 21). On the other hand, Wendel (2008) is skeptical

of sweeping 'death knell' and 'nail in the coffin' proclamations, and observes that "record labels show no overall signs of disappearing anytime soon… [because] the oft-cited diminishing CD sales of the 21st century do not alone erase the powerful business networks and marketing capabilities of record labels" (p. 100).

Whereas musicians have historically subscribed to industry practices and logics in order to achieve success, innovative methods of releasing music provide musicians with alternative pathways to success in the music industry. As musicians perceive record labels as increasingly obsolete intermediaries in the music industry, there has been a shift toward disintermediation. This is a salient change in the structure of the music industry that has had profound implications for occupational careers.

Peterson identifies four general occupational career patterns: craftsman, showman, entrepreneur, and bureaucratic functionary. According to the production perspective, shifts in the relative balance of these four career patterns can profoundly influence the production of culture, as was the case in the mid-1950s for the early development of rock (Peterson 1990). The craftsman is knowledgeable and equipped to solve technical problems, and does so competently and efficiently. The craftsman is not particularly concerned about the aesthetic or financial success of the final product on which he/she has worked, and is much more concerned about performing their craft task to the approval of fellow craftsmen. Showmen contrast dramatically with craftsmen because they are exclusively concerned with pleasing a paying audience. The showman is a salesman of the self who ignores the disdain of other professional performers. Entrepreneurs in the culture industry are individuals who combine creative, financing, marketing, and distributing factors in unique ways to meet an unsatisfied audience

demand. Functionaries fill the ranks of bureaucratically structured organizations, and are the prime source of continuity in the culture industry while entrepreneurs are a prime source of innovation (Peterson, 2000). In recent years, musicians have begun to fill take on an entrepreneurial role in addition to their role as craftsmen/showmen. Thus, the transition to digital music and the trend towards disintermediation have profound implications for the music industry from a macro level (industry structure) to a micro level (occupational careers).

Part One Conclusions

In the last decade, the traditional models of music production, distribution, and consumption have been challenged on an unprecedented scale. Among the key developments in this period of change is the diversification and democratization of tools for production and means for distribution (Knowles, 2007, p. 7). Musicians of all types now connect directly to audiences via open, cost-free social networking websites such as MySpace. Moreover, consumers utilize peer-to-peer (p2p) and other file sharing technologies to illegally attain limitless access to free music (Burnett, 2010, p. 442). The confluence of these shifts – changes in industry structure, organizational structure, occupational careers, technology, and market – has contributed to the creation of a new landscape of popular music in which "one finds dramatically different sets of power relations, where a multiplicity of options means artists are positioned… to be 'working *with* the labels, not *for* the labels'" (Wendel, 2008, p. 102). Artists today can "leverage the affordances of online social networks to not only position themselves within those networks, but also to force alterations in the structures and relational possibilities of more

traditional social networks… to engender more participatory spaces for making and

sharing music" (p. 102).

PART TWO: EXPLORING THE USAGE AND UTILITY OF MYSPACE MUSIC

Part Two of my thesis project was inspired by lingering questions in the existing

literature on the modern music industry. The limited research that exists on this topic has

emphasized the necessity for researchers to "develop a deepening awareness of the

structures and affordances of available social networks and… [to understand] how artistic

practices and identities are shaped and enabled by the networks they use" (Wendel, 2008,

p. 104). I conducted empirical research to determine the comparative usage and utility of

online social networks for artists of varying record label affiliation (i.e. signed to a major

record label, signed to an independent record label, and unsigned) and artists in different

countries. For the purpose of international comparison, I sampled profiles of popular

artists in the United States and popular artists in Spain.

My research examines the MySpace social network, which is widely recognized

as the premiere online network for musicians in the modern music industry. Since the

inception of MySpace in 2004, users have created more than 375 million profiles in the

MySpace social network (Antin & Earp, 2010). According to reputable Web Information

Company Alexa.com (2009), MySpace is the fourteenth most frequently visited website

in the world as of November 2009[3]. MySpace is the fifth most frequently visited website

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[3] Alexa Worldwide Traffic Rank is calculated using a combination of average daily visitors and pageviews
over the past three months (Alexa, 2009)

in the United States and the thirtieth most frequently visited website in Spain[4]. In both the

United States and Spain, MySpace is one of the top five social networking sites in the

country and it is the largest social networking site for musicians (Alexa.com, 2009).

According to Alexa.com (2009), 53 percent of MySpace visitors are from the United

States while the remaining 47 percent are from various countries throughout the world.

No country other than the United States contributes to greater than 6 percent of website

traffic. MySpace visitors from Spain contribute to just over 2 percent of site traffic

(Alexa.com, 2009).

     Given the popularity of MySpace, it is no surprise that the social networking

website has been the subject of scholarly interest in recent years. Some researchers have

examined the demographic makeup of the MySpace network (Thelwall, 2008), while

others have analyzed the personal information publicized on the site to address privacy

concerns (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Liu (2007) characterized the contents of MySpace

profiles under the context of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective while Perkel

(2006) documented the distinct practices that surround the customization of user

profiles[5]. Research by boyd (2006) focuses on the practice of 'friending' on social

networking sites. On MySpace, a request to add another user as a friend must be

approved. Once the request is approved, the friendship is symmetrical. Every standard

MySpace profile contains a prominently displayed "Friend Space." The Friend Space lists

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[4] The rank by country is calculated using a combination of average daily visitors and pageviews from users from that country over the past three months (Alexa, 2009)

[5] One feature of MySpace that differentiates it from many other online social networks, including Facebook and Last-FM, is its built-in customizability. Users have the ability to directly manipulate and edit the HTML (HyperText Markup Language) and CSS (Cascading Style Sheet) of their personal profile. If they choose to do so, users can create and use customized layouts to further delineate a particular discursive identity.

a musician's total number of friends, but the list is not displayed in its entirety. MySpace profiles will most often include a "Top Friends" list, which is a hyperlinked list of other MySpace accounts explicitly specified by the user. boyd (2006) found that Top Friends decisions are deliberate and important to young people, who "demarcate their identity" (p. 9) by selecting celebrities that they admire and individuals with whom they share important personal relationships.

It is important to note that my research is only concerned with a distinct subsection of the MySpace social network – the MySpace Music network. This network, created especially for musicians, is the largest musician social network in the world (Alexa.com, 2009). Though the exact prevalence of use is uncertain, one analysis conducted in early 2007 found that eighty percent of musicians releasing an album in the United States also maintained a MySpace Music profile (Dhar & Chang, 2009). In the three years since this analysis, the rate of MySpace use among musicians has continued to escalate as the established popularity of the social networking site has perpetuated its widespread use. In the words of Antin and Earp (2010), "it would be difficult to overstate the ubiquity of MySpace Music profiles" (p. 2).

Nonetheless, there is a paucity of research dedicated to exploring the MySpace Music network. Last month, Antin and Earp (2010) published an analysis of friending behavior in the network. They suggest that Top Friends are powerful symbols for musicians, and this feature of MySpace profiles allows musicians to succinctly communicate stylistic influences and artistic connections. A forthcoming article by Fields et al. investigates the relationship between social connectivity and audio-based similarity by examining the musical similarity between artists and their Top Friends.

The objective of my empirical research was to explore the usage and utility of online social networks in order to identify the ways in which these websites reflect shifts in the broader music industry (e.g., technology, market, industry structure, and careers). Therefore, I set out to empirically ascertain the type of information musicians are publicly posting through an extensive, quantitative content analysis of a sample of MySpace Music profile pages. This data collection facilitated a comparative analysis of content shared by artists of varying record label affiliation (i.e. signed to a major record label, signed to an independent record label, and unsigned) and a comparative analysis of content shared by artists in different countries (i.e. United States and Spain).

METHODS AND DATA

To assess the usage of MySpace among artists in the music industry, the current work embarked on a comprehensive content analysis of a sample of MySpace Music profile pages. In order to facilitate data collection and input, initial research efforts were shared among six individuals: Emory University Associate Professor Dr. Timothy Dowd, Emory University Ph D. candidates Sonal Nalkur, Yun Tai, and Jin Won Chung, and Emory College BA Honors candidates Max Blau and myself. Subsequent data collection and data analysis were my individual effort.

Sampling MySpace

As noted by Fields et al. (2010) in their analysis of online social networks, the MySpace social network presents a variety of challenges for gathering a representative sample of musician pages.

Since each MySpace profile is uniquely assigned a numeric identifier upon its creation, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) utilized a random number generator in their content analysis of adolescent MySpace profile pages. Unfortunately, the numeric identifiers assigned to MySpace profiles do not distinguish between MySpace Music profiles and general user profiles. Hinduja and Patchin examined the population of general user profiles, which comprise the overwhelming majority of profiles in the MySpace network. Moreover, at the time of their sampling efforts – less than one year following the inception of MySpace, there were substantially fewer orphaned/deleted accounts. Hinduja and Patchin's sampling method – executed in the summer of 2006 – rendered only 5.9 percent error due to deleted accounts. Today, a sampling method similar to that used by Hinduja and Patchin would derive an exponentially greater error because "[the MySpace network is] plagued by spammers and orphaned accounts… and noisy data" (Fields et al., 2010, p. 2). Thus, gathering a random sample of MySpace artist profiles via a random number generator was not a feasible sampling method for this study.

The difficulty in gathering a representative sample of artists on MySpace mirrors sampling difficulty in broader studies of the music industry. Historically, those who research the music industry have struggled to collect a representative sample of musicians because "no source of any kind… offers an exhaustive listing of every [musical] act… in the U.S. mainstream market" (Dowd, 2004b, p. 1448). These researchers have traditionally relied on popularity charts to track performing acts (Burnett, 2010; Lopes, 1992; Dowd, 2004b).

Since there is no exhaustive listing of every artist to create a MySpace Music account, we followed the example of prior research in the field and relied on popularity

charts. The MySpace Music navigation bar includes a link to the "Top Artists" chart, which is generated using a variety of ranking criteria including the total number of songs plays on the MySpace music player, number of Friends, and the length of the artist's MySpace membership (Wendel, 2008). Although the precise formula used to combine this information and rank artists on MySpace is not released to the public, the chart ranks artist profiles in decreasing popularity in three categories[6] based on their type of record label: unsigned, indie, and major[7]. The highest-ranking artists of each category are listed on the three-column chart.

      To facilitate an international comparison of the MySpace Music network among popular artists in the United States and Spain, I gathered two separate samples.

      To gather artists for the sample of MySpace Music profiles in the United States (i.e. Sample A), we captured the Top Artist chart specific to the United States on November 10, 2009. Each artist that reached a position in the Top 85 in any of the three label categories on the "Top Artists" chart was included in Sample A (N= 244[8]).

      To gather artists for the comparative sample of MySpace Music profiles in Spain (i.e. Sample B), I captured the Top Artist chart specific to Spain on November 10, 2009. Each artist that reached a position in the Top 85 in any of the three label categories on the "Top Artists" chart was included in Sample B (N= 251).

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[6] It is unclear how the charts determine the type of label each artist is affiliated with. Some artists are listed under a category that is inconsistent with the self-claimed type of record label in the "General Info" section of the MySpace Music profile, but the charts seem to adhere to the more widely accepted notions of "major" vs. "indie" labels

[7] Artists signed to independent labels and artists signed to major record labels are herein referred to as "indie artists" and "major artists," respectively. The term "indie artist" refers exclusively to the type of record label (independent) and is not to be confused with artists of "indie" genre.

[8] Some positions on the "Top Artists" chart were inexplicably left blank, which is the source of inconsistency between our potential sample size and the valid sample size.

Coding and Data Collection

The research team viewed all publicly accessible elements on each MySpace Music profile, including basic descriptive information listed by the user, pictures and videos posted by the user, the MySpace Music Player, and blog entries.

There are features included in MySpace musician profiles that distinguish these from the MySpace profiles of general users. The main difference is that Music profiles include a distinct audio player application. Standard MySpace music profiles also offer a section to list concert information and have a MySpace Music navigation bar toward the top of an artist's profile. Whereas the MySpace profiles of general users list "Interests" (General, Music, Movie, Television, Books, Heroes), "Details," "Schools" and "Companies," standard MySpace Music profiles have a "General Info" section which contains information such as Member Since, Website, Band Members, Influences, Sounds Like, Record Label, and Type of Label. Aside from these differences, the profiles of artists and general users are essentially the same.

We used a data collection spreadsheet to record specific types of information found on selected MySpace Music profiles. Specifically, we sought to record self-claimed artist information: geographic location; genre designation(s); number of members in the performing act; gender of the performing act; type of record label; name of record label; (musical) influences; information in "About Me" section; and tour information. Data were also collected for the following variables: ranking on MySpace "Top Artists" chart; type of record label according to MySpace "Top Artists" chart; date of origin of MySpace Music profile page ("Member Since"); date of last log-in; number of profile views; number of Friends; number of Top Friends; number of comments;

number of pictures; number of songs available for play on MySpace Music Player; number of songs available for purchase on MySpace Music Player; number of song plays on MySpace Music Player; number of videos on MySpace page; number of music albums featured on MySpace Music profile; presence of explicit hyperlinks to or mentions of sites for purchase of music; presence of hyperlinks to other user-generated websites; number of blog entries; and the date of most recent blog entry. We also indicated whether or not the artist relied on the standard website layout or elected to customize the page with a background picture. In coding the "Top Artists" chart for Spain, I also included a variable to represent the primary language used on the MySpace page. Finally, the data collection spreadsheet also included a free-response section for reflective comments about noteworthy elements of each profile.

To ensure accurate and reliable content analysis, the research team created an extensive coding scheme. Researchers met for weekly meetings to discuss developments in research and data collection, and maintained active discussion via a group discussion board. In a collaborative effort, the team rendered decisions for such ambiguities as whether or not to include a "Biography Section" as an "About Me" section (yes) and whether or not to include influences listed outside of the designated section on a MySpace profile (no). Of the random sample of profiles that were re-coded by peer members of the research team, there was overwhelming agreement and consistency in the coding of each of the profiles. This suggests that interrater reliability was high. At the suggestion of Hinduja and Patchin (2008), we archived each profile by saving the web page in HTML format. Given the dynamic nature of MySpace profiles, the archive of profiles was a helpful tool during data collection and subsequent data analysis.

RESULTS

Prevalence of MySpace Music

To get a better assessment of the prevalence of the MySpace Music network in Spain as well as the United States, I accessed a traditional popularity chart of the current Top 100 albums in Spain and in the United States. For the artist of each of the Top 100 Billboard albums in the United States, I entered search query on the MySpace network. Not surprisingly, 100 percent of the artists who achieved a top-selling album in the United States maintain a profile on MySpace. Of the Top 100 best-selling album artists in Spain, two did not have active MySpace profiles.

Length of Membership

Burnett and Wikström (2006) claim that independent record labels are often at the forefront of change. MySpace membership among popular artists in the United States supports this theory. According to the empirical data, indie artists were indeed at the forefront of the shift to networked, online culture. By converting the "Member Since" date to decimal form[9], I discovered that MySpace profiles of indie artists in Sample A were, on average, created earliest. The average "Member Since" date among indie artists in this sample is April 2005. The average major-label artist in Sample A created their MySpace profile about three months thereafter, in July 2005. The profiles for unsigned

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[9] "Member Since" [Numeric Year] + (((([Numeric Month]-1) x 30) + [Numeric Day])) / 365
e.g., Member since: 4/20/2004
[2004] + (((([4]-1) x 30) + [20])) / 365 = 2005.3
April 20, 2005 would be converted to 2005.3 since it is approximately the 110th day of a 365-day year and 110/365=0.3

artists in Sample A were created most recently, with an average "Member Since" date of January 2006.

In comparison, the collection of profiles in Sample B is substantially newer than those in Sample A. The average date of profile creation in Sample B is March 2007. Consistent with Burnett and Wikström's theory, indie artists were, on average, the first to create MySpace profiles in Sample B. Among these artists, the average date of profile creation is June 2006, which is about five months before that of major artists (November 2006). Unsigned artists in this sample joined, on average, almost one year after major artists (October 2007).

Geographic Location

Although we gathered our first sample (i.e. Sample A) from the "Top Artists" chart for the United States, the sample included various artists who listed their [primary] geographic locations as Canada, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, France, Finland, South Africa, Barbados, and the United Kingdom. Similarly, the "Top Artists" chart for Spain (i.e. Sample B) included many artists who reported a geographic location outside of Spain. There were a notably high number of American, English, and Canadian artists represented in Sample B, and several artists from South America, Asia, and Europe (not Spain).

The fact that several artists reached highly coveted spots on the "Top Artists" charts outside of their primary geographic location is demonstrative of the increasingly borderless market that Paul Rutten describes as "one of the most notable developments in the world's popular music in the post-war era" (Rutten, 1991, p. 294). Baym (2007) has

attributed the new shape of traditional markets to artists and fans that use the Internet to publicize and distribute pop culture materials across international boundaries. While many artists signed to major record labels certainly experienced international success prior to the advent of the Internet (e.g., The Beatles), non-professional musicians did not have the ability to share their music on an international scale. Yet, of the 51 artists in Sample B who listed geographic locations outside of Spain, 12 of these non-native artists are not currently affiliated with a record label. The international popularity of these unsigned artists illustrates the connective abilities of online social networks and the importance of virtual communities in creating a fan base.

Language

There is one especially interesting contrast between the non-native artists represented in Sample A (i.e. United States) and Sample B (i.e. Spain). All of the MySpace profiles of U.S. "Top Artists" – including those of non-native artists – use only English. Although Finnish symphonic metal band Apocalyptica reported Helsinki, Finland as their location, their entire profile – which includes a 332-word "About Me" section – is written exclusively in English. Similarly, the profile page of French electronic music duo Daft Punk uses only English. On the other hand, only 80 percent of Spain's "Top Artist" profiles are maintained in the country's native language (i.e. Spanish[10]). Over 18 percent (N=46) of profiles in Sample B use exclusively English. While some of these 46 artists hail from the United States (e.g., 30 Seconds to Mars,

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[10] Spanish is the official language throughout the whole country of Spain. However, some regions have co-official languages (i.e. Basque, Catalan, Galician, and Aranese). Use of these regional languages was noted in the reflective comments during data collection, but it was not considered a foreign language.

Vampire Weekend, Ronald, and Plug in Stereo), and England (e.g., Muse, Benji Boko), a considerable number originate from other countries, such as Bosnia (e.g., Iron Steel). The considerable imbalance in the population demographics of MySpace vistors (53% US; 2% Spain) may explain why musicians cater linguistically to the English-speaking community.

Of the 251 profiles in Sample B, only one used a consistent mix of both English and Spanish. On Colombian artist Shakira's profile, fans can stream both the English and Spanish versions of every song off of her most recent album "She Wolf" (released as "Loba" in Spanish-speaking countries). Of the hundreds of blog posts that Shakira has published since joining MySpace in January of 2005, many have included both a message translated in both English and Spanish. On June 29, 2009, for example, Shakira posted a blog commemorating the death of Michael Jackson. The title, "Michael Jackson: The King Is Transformed Into a Legend," appears only in English, but is repeated and translated in the body of the blog post, below:

> Michael Jackson: The King Is Transformed Into a Legend.
> Michael Jackson: El Rey Se Transforma En Una Leyenda
>
> Michael Jackson was the King of artistic genius, of dance, of innovation and fantasy. He reinvented the pop genre and found a new way to articulate music through images that will last forever. Of his voice Frank Sinatra once said that he was "the only singer I've seen who was better than me." With his death, the King is transformed into a Legend for all time. My profound sympathy to his family, fans and loved ones.
>
> Shakira
>
> Michael Jackson fue sin duda el rey de la genialidad artística, del movimiento, de la innovación y la fantasía. Él reinventó el género de la música Pop y encontró una nueva forma de articular la música con las imágenes que será recordada para siempre. Por su calidad de voz, Frank Sinatra lo definió como "el único cantante que he visto mejor que yo". Con su muerte, el Rey se transforma en una Leyenda para todos los tiempos. Mi cariño va a toda su familia, fans y a todos sus seres queridos.
>
> Shakira

Still, several elements of Shakira's profile show linguistic preference to English. All of the promotional graphics on Shakira's MySpace use only English, and advertisements promote the English version of her album. Links to "Send a Message" or "Add As A Friend" are also in English. Of her fifty most recent comments at the time of data collection, ten users left comments in Spanish while forty users used English. Ironically, Shakira posted a blog in October of 2009 with the subject heading "She Wolf / Loba animated contest winner announced…" In the body of the blog post, Shakira posted a fan-made, animated video for her Spanish single, Loba. All of the lyrics to the song in the video are in Spanish. Below the fan-made video, Shakira simply wrote, "Congratulations to Andrés from Barcelona, Spain, who made the winning entry. And thanks to all of you who took part in the contest."

While the majority of monolingual text on Shakira's profile is in English, I found one unique instance of Spanish monolingualism. Also in October of 2009, Shakira posted a 200-word blog post that commemorated the death of Mercedes Sosa, an Argentine folk singer. The entire post is written in Spanish, and the overwhelming majority of the 49 comments that MySpace users left in response were also in Spanish. One MySpace user commented, "I only speak English, lol," and another replied, "ya I didn't understand a word u wrote lol." Two other users informed their English-speaking peers that "there's a translate button[11]"

The profile for Governors, a rock band located in Euskal Herria (i.e. Basque Country), uses three languages. Governors is one of the only bands that replaced the

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[11] A generic Google-powered hyperlink below the blog text presents readers with the option to translate text using a computer translator that generates a very basic, gist translation.

standard panel of hyperlinks that customarily says "Send A Message" and "Add As A Friend" with a custom image that includes hyperlinks to "Enviar Mensaje" (Send Message) and "Añadir A Amigos" (Add to Friends). The 268-word biography in the "About Me" section is written first in Basque, and then translated immediately below in Spanish. Approximately half of the blogs are in Spanish and half are in Basque, and very few are translated in both. All of their album titles and all of the songs available for play on the MySpace Music Player are in Basque. Yet, the promotional graphics on the band's profile read "Frenetikodrome: Diska Berria /// Nuevo Disco /// New Album." The only other English words on the website are in the "Band Members" section; five individual photographs of the band members are captioned as "Vocals," "Guitar," "Drums," "Bass," and "Guitar," respectively. There is no translation of these English captions elsewhere on the site in either Spanish or Basque.

Profile Customization

The customizable MySpace interface allows artists to establish and project a discursive identity that does not rely on music alone. Artists supplement their music by altering the layout and appearance of their MySpace profile, and by offering a wealth of additional content. Artists can upload and incorporate photos, artwork, and video into their MySpace profile in a variety of ways. Over 90 percent (N=220) of musicians in Sample A and 60 percent of musicians in Sample B uploaded 10 or more photographs to their MySpace profile. Some artists had more than 1,500 photographs available.

Artists also actively shape their identity by writing a self-descriptive "About Me" biography, listing influences, and self-selecting their genre classification. Self-reported

genre is a novel concept in the wake of historically bureaucratic distribution outlets. On MySpace, artists can classify themselves as any genre they feel is appropriate for their music, whether or not this conforms to the standard taxonomies. Artist Jason Mraz – traditionally considered a pop rock musician – classifies his music as three genres on his MySpace page: Healing & EasyListening, Surf, and Gospel. Historically, no distributor has ever assigned his music to any of these three genres.

On MySpace, musicians create a visual platform to supplement their music. If they choose to do so, musicians can create and use customized layouts that alter the graphical appearance of their MySpace profile[12]. The overwhelming majority of the profiles in both samples departed from the standard default MySpace design structure; it was rare to encounter a profile that conformed to the standard, default style of a MySpace page. In Sample A, there was only one profile that retained the white, blue, and orange default layout of a MySpace page. This profile page belonged to unsigned artist eatmewhileimhot. In Sample B, less than 8 percent of artists in Sample B (N=19) retained the standard profile layout.

One of the ways in which an artist may customize his or her profile is by selecting a background image for the profile. 153 of the 244 profiles in Sample A – 63 percent of the sample – elected to customize their profile in this way. In Sample B, only 39 percent of artists (N=98) selected a custom background image.

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[12] It is important to note that manipulating the HTML and CSS of the MySpace profile allows artists to hide some of the information that would otherwise be shared on a standard profile. Information such as genre, location, total profile views, total number of friends, top friends, name of record label, and/or type of record label can get hidden behind custom MySpace layouts. Therefore, this information was not always available for all of the profiles in our samples. Aberrant trends in missing data are noted where significant.

The trend toward profile customization and enthusiastic artist-to-fan content delivery on MySpace suggests that, at least to an extent, musicians use the Internet and online social networks as a tool to construct and maintain particular discursive, subcultural and independent identities.

Social Networking

Unlike the small, centralized nature of a record label, where artists are either 'in' or 'out,' online social networks such as MySpace are massive and extremely decentralized (Wendel, 2008). For popular artists in the United States, the size of an artist's network was heavily correlated with their label affiliation. The variables designed to measure the level of musician networking activity on MySpace Music suggest that artists on major labels tend to have the largest online social networks and the largest fan communities. Major artists had established the most connections in the network – both permanent and fleeting. Major artists had, on average, the greatest number of profile views, the greatest number of friends, and the greatest number of comments. This may be a function of the snowball effect of large networks. As an artist expands their online social network by making their way into more Friend Spaces, their traceable presence in the online world grows, as does the probability that other users will encounter their profile as they browse the network. On the other hand, unsigned artists attained, on average, the least number of profile views, the least number of friends, and the least number of comments. However, unsigned and indie artists both displayed prosocial behavior by listing, on average, more Top Friends and musical influences than artists who already have large social networks.

Geographic location was also an accurate predictor of network size. The social networks of musicians in Spain had considerably smaller MySpace networks than the artists in the United States. The considerable imbalance in the population demographics of MySpace vistors (53% US; 2% Spain) may contribute to the substantial size difference of the social networks.

The profiles in Sample A attained an average of 25,215,380 profile views (median=16,892,751). There was substantial variation among profiles for artists signed to major labels, artists signed to indie labels, and unsigned artists. For unsigned artists, MySpace profiles had a mean of 8,727,710 views (median=6,247,702). The minimum number of profile views for unsigned artist profiles was 392,030 and the maximum was 48,875,639. For indie artists, MySpace profiles had an average of 18,109,049 views (median=17,890,211). The minimum number of profile views for indie artist profiles was 1,830,065 and the maximum was 50,835,581. For major artists, MySpace profiles had an average of 46,511,292 views (median=33,366,259). The minimum number of profile views for a major artist profile was 462,288 while the maximum was 279,520,117. Due to profile customization, this information was inaccessible for 54 artist profiles. There is no discernible correlation between exclusion of this information and musical genre; however, 24 of these 49 profiles belong to artists signed to independent record labels, 13 belong to artists signed to major labels, and 12 belong to unsigned artists.

Comparatively, profiles in Sample B received less than three percent of the traffic of profiles in Sample A. Sample B attained an average of only 635,367 profile views (median=127,435). The bilingual profile of Shakira – which occupied the number 59 spot on the Spanish "Top Artists" Chart at the time of sampling – attained the maximum

number of profile views: 20,501,610. Interestingly, all of the artists in Sample B that

attained greater than 10,000,000 profile views (N=24) reported geographic locations

outside of Spain, and all except Shakira wrote exclusively in English on their MySpace

profiles. Several Spanish profiles had accumulated less than 1,000 profile views despite

long-standing profile pages. At the time of data collection, unsigned artist Meryj had only

194 profile views since creating her MySpace in September of 2008. Nonetheless, Meryj

managed to secure the number 83 spot on the "Top Artists" chart in Spain.

While label affiliation certainly correlates with number of profile views in the

sample from the United States, the correlation is far less apparent in Sample B. The mean

number of profile views for unsigned artists was 896,038 (median = 49,083), the mean

number of profile views for indie artists was 289,084 (median = 247,308), and the mean

number of profile views for major artists was 3,102,738 (median = 794,028). In this case,

outliers in the data set significantly skew the means, so the median is a better indicator of

central tendency. This trend suggests a moderate correlation between label affiliation and

number of profile views. However, label affiliation was a less accurate predictor of

profile views than geographic location or language. The average number of profile views

for artists outside of Spain is 41,930,037 while the average number of profile views for

artists in Spain is 438,015.

Artists in Sample A are linked to an average of 419,012 Friends

(median=285,584). The mean is slightly inflated by the maximum: 3,928,273. There is

considerable variation among unsigned, indie, and major artists. While unsigned artists

have a mean of 147,080 friends (median=106,474), indie artists have an average of

370,903 (median=291,899) friends, and major artists have an average of 720,904 friends

(median=610,074). Due to profile customization, this information is missing on 5 profiles. There is no discernible pattern for artists who excluded this information.

Artists in Sample B are linked to an average of 29,012 Friends (median=15,584). As was the case for number of profile views, label affiliation is not a significantly accurate predictor of number of Friends, although there is a slight upward trend between the median number of friends for unsigned, indie, and major artists. Once again, geographic location and profile language have a considerably greater correlation with total number of Friends. The average number of Friends for artists outside of Spain is 226,584 while the average number of Friends for artists in Spain is 34,015.

Artists in Sample A selected an average of 16 Top Friends, which is the default number of Top Friends suggested by the website. Four artists had selected 40 Top Friends, which is the maximum number allowed by MySpace. 28 profiles did not have a "Top Friends" section. Although network analysis by Antin and Earp (2010) suggested that prosocial behavior is more common among prominent, mainstream musicians on MySpace Music, only 5 unsigned artists declined to select Top Friends, compared to 12 major artists and 11 indie artists. Moreover, all four of the artists who selected 40 Top Friends were listed as unsigned. Unsigned and indie artists selected an average of 17 Top Friends (median=16) whereas major artists selected an average of only 14 (median=12).

Artists in Sample B selected an average of 24 Top Friends, which was substantially higher than the average for Sample A. There were no consistent patterns within Sample B with regard to label affiliation, genre, or location.

Of the 244 artists in Sample A, only 40 list at least one musical influence in the "Influences" section of their MySpace profile. One reason for this may be, as suggested

by Antin and Earp (2010), that musicians use the Top Friends feature to symbolically acknowledge their musical influences in lieu of listing their influences. Of these 40 artists who list at least one influence, only 16 artists list more than 5 (maximum=71). For the artists who list at least one influence, the median number of influences is 4.

27 percent of unsigned artists in Sample A (N=22) indicate at least one musical influence on their profile. Of those artists who do indicate at least one, the average number of influences is 15 (median=5.5). Less than 13 percent of indie artists (N=9) indicate at least one influence, with an average of 9 influences (median=5) among this subsample. Less than 11 percent of major artists (N=9) indicate at least one influence, with an average of 9 influences (median=4) reported among these 9 artists. Unsigned artists in Sample A are far more likely to list musical influences, which is consistent with their prosocial behavior in selecting Top Friends.

Artist profiles in Sample A have an average of 155,384 comments, (median=60,033). Some artists chose to disable their comments section, whereas the maximum number of comments was 3,855,439. For unsigned artists in this sample, the average number of comments is 41,311 (median=26,628). For independent artists, the average is 117,750 (median=66,602). For major artists, the average is 297,282 (median=137,459). Artist profiles in Sample B, on the other hand, have an average of only 9,326 comments (median=1,326). When controlling for geographic location, unsigned artist profiles had the least number of comments (median=421) whereas major artist profiles had the greatest number of comments (median=1,920).

Music

One of the most important features of a MySpace profile for musicians is the MySpace Music Player. Full-length versions or clips of an unlimited number of songs (i.e. tracks) can be uploaded to an artist's profile. By managing some basic account preferences, musicians using MySpace can elect to make their tracks available as streaming audio, downloadable MP3s, embeddable audio files, and/or purchasable audio files. The music player keeps track of and displays "Total Plays," or the total number of times a given artist's tracks have been played since the artist has been active on MySpace.

On average, unsigned artists attain the least number of song plays: 17,907,655. Perhaps this is due to the fact that unsigned artists upload an average of only 7.6 tracks. The only profile that does not have any songs available from streaming on the MySpace Music player belongs to an unsigned artist. Moreover, only 42 percent (N=34) of unsigned artists offered at least one song for purchase. Of the few who offer at least one song for purchase, the average unsigned artist offers only 4.4 purchasable tracks.

Artists in Sample A upload an average of 8.3 songs to make available for streaming on the MySpace Music Player (median=8). The average number of total plays for the artists in this sample is 78,332,504. One artist uploaded 32 songs for streaming on the audio player, which is the maximum number of available songs in the sample.

Major artists upload an average of 8.6 tracks. These artists achieve the most song plays: 154,174,860. Moreover, 93 percent of major artists (N=78) have at least one song available for purchase. Of those who have to least one song for purchase, the average major artist has 6.1 purchasable tracks.

Despite the fact that indie artists upload an average of 8.7 tracks to the MySpace Music Player, these artists attain less than half of the total song plays of their major-label peers. In Sample A, indie artists attain an average of 58,367,567 total song plays. 85 percent of indie artists (N=68) have at least one of these songs available for purchase. Of the indie artists who have at least one track available for purchase, the average has 6.5 purchasable tracks.

Links to External Merchandise Vendors

On the data collection spreadsheet, researchers indicated whether or not a profile contains an explicit hyperlink to an official band store or any of the following online merchandise vendors: iTunes, Amazon, CDBaby, WalMart, LiveNation, Rhapsody, Zune, Napster, and/or a ringtone provider. Researchers also indicated the number of hyperlinks to other merchandise vendors on the profile page (e.g., hyperlinks to Hot Topic, Target, FYE, SnoCap, TicketMaster).

In order to best assess these trends, I created an index to count the total number of hyperlinks to online merchandise vendors on each profile. The profiles of unsigned and indie artists in the United States sample had, on average, a greater number and a wider variety of hyperlinks to merchandise vendors. Unsigned and indie artists both contained an average of 3.44 hyperlinks to merchandise vendors (median=3). Major artists contained an average of only 2.73 hyperlinks to merchandise vendors (median=2). Profiles of major artists were the most likely to have hyperlinks to WalMart and iTunes. Indie artists were more likely than unsigned artists to have hyperlinks to iTunes. The only three profiles in Sample A that contain hyperlinks to CDBaby belong to unsigned artists.

Comparatively fewer profiles in Sample B contained hyperlinks to external merchandise vendors. Of the 251 profiles in Sample B, only 43 contain hyperlinks to iTunes, 9 to Amazon, 2 to WalMart, and 1 to LiveNation. Controlling for geographic location, even fewer profiles of Spanish artists in Sample B contain hyperlinks to these merchandise vendors. In total, only 11 profiles of native Spanish artists in Sample B contain a hyperlink to iTunes and 1 to Amazon.

Of the 79 profiles of unsigned artists in Sample A, 46 contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, 20 to Amazon, 3 to CDBaby, 1 to WalMart, 0 to LiveNation, 3 to Rhapsody, 2 to Zune, 1 to Napster, 20 to a ringtone provider, and 42 to an official band store. In total, this subsample contains 49 links to other vendors, including FYE, Hot Topic, Target, Ebay, and Yahoo.

Of the 80 profiles of indie artists in Sample A, 58 contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, 28 to Amazon, 0 to CDBaby, 8 to WalMart, 2 to LiveNation, 3 to Rhapsody, 0 to Zune, 1 to Napster, 39 to a ringtone provider, and 58 to an official band store. In total, this subsample contains 78 links to other vendors.

Of the 84 profiles of major artists in Sample A, 61 contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, 23 to Amazon, 0 to CDBaby, 3 to WalMart, 2 to LiveNation, 5 to Rhapsody, 2 to Zune, 3 to Napster, 48 to a ringtone provider, and 54 to an official band store. In total, this subsample contains only 28 links to other vendors.

Of the 84 profiles of unsigned artists in Sample B, 11 contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, 4 to Amazon, 1 to WalMart, 16 to a ringtone provider, 19 to an official band store, 20 to other vendors, and none to the rest. Filtering out non-native

Spanish artists, the count lowers substantially. Only 2 unsigned, native Spanish artists contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes.

Of the 83 profiles of indie artists in Sample B, 11 contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, 3 to Amazon, 16 to a ringtone provider, 34 to an official band store, 22 to other vendors, and none to the rest. Only 4 indie, native Spanish artists contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, and one contains a hyperlink to Amazon.

Of the 84 profiles of major artists in Sample B, 21 contained an explicit hyperlink to iTunes, 2 to Amazon, 1 to WalMart, 1 to LiveNation, 31 to a ringtone provider, 49 to an official band store, 16 links to other vendors, and none to the rest. Only 5 major, native Spanish artists contain an explicit hyperlink to iTunes.

Links to External Social Networks and Fan Communities

On the data collection spreadsheet, researchers indicated whether or not a profile contains an explicit hyperlink to a freestanding band page or any of the following social networking websites: Facebook, Twitter, Imeem, Bebo, LastFM, BuzzNet, PureVolume, YouTube, and/or iLike. Researchers also indicated the presence of hyperlinks to online social networking sites not otherwise accounted for.

It seems as though indie artists have a very high level of participation in online social networks as compared to unsigned and major artists. Indie artists in Sample A had a much wider variety of hyperlinks on their MySpace profiles. This trend is also apparent in Sample B when controlling for geographic location. Among Spanish artists in Sample B, the profiles of indie artists contain the greatest number and variety of hyperlinks to online social networks.

Of the 79 profiles of unsigned artists in Sample A, 32 contain an explicit hyperlink to Facebook, 46 to Twitter, 4 to Imeem, 1 to Bebo, 4 to LastFM, 3 to BuzzNet, 11 to PureVolume, 43 to YouTube, and 16 to iLike. 52 profiles contain a hyperlink to a freestanding band page. Among the 79 profiles, there are hyperlinks to 37 other websites, including Demand It!, Flickr, and SoundClick. Profiles of unsigned artists in Sample A contain an average of 2.77 hyperlinks to social networking websites.

Of the 80 profiles of indie artists in Sample A, 46 contain an explicit hyperlink to Facebook, 48 to Twitter, 18 to Imeem, 2 to Bebo, 12 to LastFM, 14 to BuzzNet, 25 to PureVolume, 38 to YouTube, and 22 to iLike. 65 profiles contained a hyperlink to a freestanding band page. Among the 79 profiles, there are hyperlinks to 80 other online social networks. Profiles of indie artists in Sample A contain an average of 4.625 hyperlinks to social networking websites.

Of the 84 profiles of major artists in Sample A, 35 contain an explicit hyperlink to Facebook, 29 to Twitter, 8 to Imeem, 8 to Bebo, 3 to LastFM, 1 to BuzzNet, 1 to PureVolume, 33 to YouTube, and 8 to iLike. 63 profiles contain a hyperlink to a freestanding band page. Among the 79 profiles, there were hyperlinks to 50 other online social networks. Profiles of major artists in Sample A contain an average of 3.32 hyperlinks to social networking websites.

In Sample B, a handful of artists use YouTube, Twitter, LastFM, and iLike. The presence of Facebook is less pronounced, although some artists post hyperlinks to a similar social networking site called Tuenti. Many artists have freestanding band pages, but hyperlinks to these websites are not as prevalent as in Sample A.

Overall, profiles of unsigned artists in Sample B contained an average of 1.82 hyperlinks to online social networks, profiles of major artists contained an average of 2.03 hyperlinks to online social networks, and indie artist profiles contained an average of 2.39 hyperlinks to online social networks, with great preference to YouTube and freestanding band websites.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the general usage trends among musicians on MySpace both perpetuate and reflect the transformations in the American music industry and the production of music. The sheer popularity of the MySpace social network among American artists is reflective of the changing landscape of popular music brought on by the confluence of shifts in technology, market, industry structure, and occupational careers. Although MySpace Music is the largest and most popular social network for musicians in both the United States and in Spain, musicians in Spain do not embrace MySpace as actively as those in the United States. The prevalence of MySpace is less ubiquitous in Spain. Virtually every single American musician has a MySpace profile (Antin and Earp, 2010), and not even all of the Top 100 Spanish artists maintain a MySpace. On average, musicians in Spain post fewer songs, fewer photos, fewer videos, and are less likely to post blogs. Moreover, Spanish musicians' most recent log-in date is, on average, almost six days before American artists. Moreover, Spanish musicians log-in, on average, half as often as American musicians; the most recent log-in date was an average of two days for American artists and four days for Spanish artists.

Many aspects of MySpace Music profiles reflect the changing landscape of music. In the context of low-cost production and distribution technologies, the increasingly blurred distinction between professional and amateur musicians is a salient transformation. The MySpace social network both perpetuates and reflects this change.

MySpace is a virtual meeting place where artists and fans connect. Within MySpace, fans and artists intermingle with one another side-by-side. In this way, even the interface of MySpace reflects the blurring distinction between musicians and fans – one of the salient features of the modern music industry. The lack of distinction for the MySpace Music network within the general MySpace network is a literal representation of the disappearing superstar phenomenon that Gopal et al. (2006) observed in the modern music indsutry.

By eliminating traditional gatekeeping and manufacturing costs, and connecting individuals to a network of 375 million users, MySpace democratizes distribution for all individuals. Amateur musicians or fans who previously identified themselves as mere consumers of music have a newfound ability to produce and share their own creative efforts within an expansive community. In the words of Evan Wendel (2008), "when anyone can participate, fans and artists, amateurs and professionals, can quickly become one and the same" (p. 81).

In the contemporary music industry, marked by disintermediation, behavior on MySpace facilitates active communication between musicians and fans. Several artists in the sample provided phone numbers and encouraged fans to call band members. Others encouraged fans to send text messages that would appear on the website via Web 2.0

application SayNow. Many artists encouraged fans to sign up for a virtual mailing list via Fanbridge or register for text message updates via Mozes or Mobile Mob.

Baym (2007) found that recording artists actively engage in virtual communities by friending their fans and one another and often acting as fans themselves; this was evident in the MySpace network. A majority of artists communicate with fans via blog posts (94 percent of artists have posted at least one blog on their profile) and many share important updates and news on by embedding Web 2.0 applications such as the 'What Am I Doing Now?' widget or the Twitter widget on their MySpace. The aforementioned artist-to-fan content delivery (e.g., sharing of photos, videos, and audio) is another illustration of one way in which MySpace is an active communication channel for artists to reach fans.

As David Beer (2008) observed in his exploration of Web 2.0 applications, musicians encourage fans to communicate with each other. This was especially true on MySpace, where the presence of hyperlinks to iLike and Demand It reflects the changing role of the fan/publicist. Many artists encouraged fans to join official fan clubs or fan communities such as FanCorps, FanBlast, FanBase, and FanBaseSocial. Many artists also established fan discussion boards and forums online to generate fandom. With the diminishing presence of traditional record labels, many artists have embraced entrepreneurial marketing tactics. In the context of the modern music industry, where "consumer taste sharing drives digital music sales" (Slater & McGuire, 2005, p.1), fans intermediate and build the artist fan base. Therefore, artists use their MySpace to connect fans to one another, so that they can establish large fan communities that will eventual

become fandom. This phenomenon supports Baym's prediction that the historically clear line between fan and professional publicist is changing.

The presence of hyperlinks to multiple online social networks illustrates Baym's observation that artists encourage fans to explore various Web 2.0 platforms across the Internet. Artists want to connect with their fans not only via MySpace, but also via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LastFM, etc. However, one primary difference between the profiles of U.S. "Top Artists" and profiles of "Top Artists" in Spain is that the former seemed to encourage visitors to navigate away from the MySpace domain. With ubiquitous hyperlinks – many are even hidden and embedded in photos and graphics – MySpace has become a portal to direct fans to other online social networks. Perhaps this is a recent artist development in reaction to the overcrowding of the MySpace network. As Wendel (2008) explains, "while the openness of MySpace is considered one of its greatest attributes, especially for unsigned artists, it can also prove to be one of the most problematic aspects of the social network" (p. 89). Recent figures estimate that there are over 10 million artists contributing to the 375 million profiles on the MySpace social network. MySpace is a crowded network, and perhaps artists do not feel that MySpace can connect supply with demand, which Anderson (2006) claims is vital to success in the Long Tail Market. Research by Slater and McGuire (2008) suggests that artists should not neglect traditional channels, such as radio, television, and magazines, which is perhaps why Wendel (2008) explains that musicians must also actively reach out to channels beyond MySpace to communicate directly with an audience.

CONCLUSION

With the traditional models of music production profoundly challenged in the last decade, dramatic changes in technology, market, industry structure, and occupational careers have contributed to the creation of a new landscape of popular music. In the music industry of the 21st century, online social networks are valuable tools for artists. Social networking sites like MySpace not only contributed to a "stepping outside of dominant discourse" (Wendel 2008), but it seems as though MySpace will also be a key component in the new landscape of popular music.

My research is the first exploratory analysis of the MySpace Music network. In this project, I have identified some features of the MySpace social network that both reflect and perpetuate the transformations of the last decade. I have demonstrated how the ability for artists to create discursive identities through profile customization and artist-to-fan content delivery expands and shifts the occupational careers of musicians. I have explained the significance of the ability for artists to communicate directly with fans via blogs and comments. I have also explained the significance of fan interaction, which has a demonstrated impact on artist success. Artists on MySpace strongly encourage fans to interact via third-party web 2.0 applications on MySpace profiles that are dedicated to the creation of fan communities and fandoms.

This research presents many rich opportunities for future researchers to understand the more intricate phenomena of the MySpace Music network. Perhaps future research will supplement my quantitative research with more qualitative studies that may reveal the explanation for the broad trends that I have identified. My results also highlight some unique sociolinguistic phenomena within the MySpace social network that may be

worth exploring in future research. I suggest interviewing a sample of musicians to better understand their choice to participate (or not participate) in the MySpace network and to better understand their behavior in online social networks.

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